

September 4, 2015

The Honorable T.S. Ellis, III
United States District Court Judge
Eastern District of Virginia
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, Virginia 22314;

Dear Judge Ellis,

I am the founder of a developer community and events organization called "Modev", which consists of about 10,000 developers nationally. I have known Muneeb Akhter for the past four years as he and his brother Sohaib have participated in several of our events. It was very apparent that they were extremely gifted technologically. The brothers worked hard and were always polite. I also recall that we made accommodations so that they could pray during one of our events.

On more than one occasion Muneeb sought my advice about how he and his brother could market their company, Warden Systems. I encouraged them to continue to participate in conferences, hackathons (a contest where developers compete to build the best app in less than 24 hours) and other events. They seemed to have been successful in getting a foothold in the market.

I believe our nation faces an impending security crisis as attacks on our networks get more sophisticated and our data and infrastructure becomes more vulnerable than ever. I realize that Muneeb leveraged his gifts for the wrong reasons but I also know that we need more people with his type of raw talent and expertise to help us overcome our security challenges. I hope that you will consider this dynamic in your sentencing of Mr. Akhter.

Sincerely,

Peter Erickson
Founder, Modev